CB 175* 563

Spaniard might slap or kick him. An old informant who carried mail during the last part of the 19th century said he always avoided the Spaniards. If he saw one coming he would ride his horse in the opposite direction to avoid giving a sign of respect.

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It was the custom of Spaniards not to permit Filipinos to wear their shirt-tails inside their pants. The Barong Tagalog, the national male costume of Filipinos, a finely-woven and embroidered shirt, is, Guerrero writes, "nothing but a shirt worn with its tails out." He continues by stating: "This seems to have been decried by the Spaniards to make it possible to tell at first glance who was a Spaniard, with the right to wear his shirt-tails properly tucked in, and who was an inferior 'indio.'"[88]

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One informant said when he was an altar boy for the priest he broke wind during mass. After the service the priest gave him a lashing for this unintentional act. Another informant told how the priest during mass would cry to the people who failed to kneel: "Oy, mga, carabao, lohod kamo!" (Oh, my carabaos, kneel!). If one was discovered possessing a Bible the book was confiscated and burned. Many of the people still believe today, as more did in the past, that to own a Bible may cause insanity.

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CB 563 175*

On the whole, the Spaniards regarded the Filipinos as children, to be civilized, according to Spanish concepts, and Christianized.

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[88] Leon Ma. Guerrero, "What Are Filipinos Like?", The Philippine Quarterly, I, No. 3 (December, 1951), pp. 5-6.

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Nearly all cooking pottery is purchased; most of it is made in Dumaguete for none of the local womenfolk make their own pottery. In the near vicinity of Caticugan only one woman regularly made pottery that she bartered for food. Weaving of fine fabrics from banana fibers has ceased completely in the barrrio; the weaving of abaca cloth is rapidly declining, though a few women still weave abaca for skirts, men's shirts, and a few other purposes. Abaca clothing, however, is quite unpopular with the younger generation and the barriofolk's style of dress is being changed by the post-war traffic in used American clothing.

Few baskets are made today in Caticugan. The winnowing basket that is used daily is normally purchased in the poblacion or in Dumaguete. I never saw a woman making such a basket, though several Naga women were said to weave them. Tin basins have taken the place of wooden basins and metal spoons and forks are rapidly replacing those made of coconut shell. The most widespread handicraft in Caticugan is the weaving of sleeping mats and bags from buri fronds; this handicraft appears to be threatened by a decrease in palms.

The decline of barrio handicrafts has been recognized by the Philippine government. School programs attempt to perpetuate and revive certain handicrafts; however, the school programs I observed do not promise to be very successful. Advice on the development or modernization of cottage industries has been given by American experts as one means of reducing the chronic

underemployment of the barriofolk.[2] Most of these cottage industries aim at producing export handicrafts or luxury items. Perhaps most important is the changing attitudes of the barriofolk toward their own handicrafts. Abaca clothing is felt, by many young folk, to be a symbol of a rustic. The barriofolk claim that they can buy better and cheaper pottery than they can make. With the expanding role of money in the general economy, fewer people make handicrafts for bartering. As a result, in Caticugan, the younger generation, particularly women, grows up without training in basic handicrafts of their forefathers, and with an attitude that such training is neither desirable nor important.

This chapter deals with the following handicrafts that still exist in Caticugan and vicinity: (1) pottery; (2) buri weaving and basketry; (3) abaca weaving; and (4) woodwork, i.e., making wooden saddles and carved wooden bolo handles.

POTTERY

There are an estimated 20,000 potters in the Philippines. "Much of the work is done by women who sit beneath

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[2]Recently a crafts team was sent to the Philippines under the auspices of the Economic Cooperation Administration and the United Nations. It consisted of a furniture designer, a wood products designer, and a textile expert, Marianne Hammarstrom. The unpublished Hammarstrom report has been briefly, and somewhat inaccurately, summarized by Will Savoy, "Philippine Weavers Learn New Techniques," Department of State Field Reporter, I, No. 2 (September-October, 1952), pp. 13-4. I was able to secure a typescript copy of the original report.

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discouraged most women who knew how to weave. Since no abaca is grown near Caticugan, it is necessary to make a long, tiring trip to the mountain caingins of the north. Weavers of Caticugan probably would have woven more if abaca had been cheaper and easier to obtain.

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Second, abaca fabric is stiff and scratchy; soaking and pounding the material helps but it remains uncomfortable to wear. Third, the younger generation, for the most part, is prejudiced against abaca clothing that they regard as a symbol of rusticity. This attitude, with improved educational facilities and increased contacts with Dumaguete, may not be expected to decline. Most young people said they were ashamed to wear abaca clothing to church or to festive events such as the fiesta. As one informant explained:

> Some people will tease you if you wear abaca clothing. 'Why are you wearing abaca? You look like the old people in the ancient times'--this is what they may say.

Only the children of the poor wore abaca clothing to school in Siaton poblacion.

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With the decline in the number of Caticugan weavers, young girls are not being taught to weave. I never saw a young woman weaving in the barrio; the weavers were always older women. Some young people said they did not wear abaca clothing because no one in their family could weave. Mothers explained their daughters were not interested in learning to weave for they preferred to wear clothing purchased in the poblacion stores. In the past a mature woman

who could weave skillfully was a more desirable mate than one who could not. Difficulties of obtaining abaca fiber, the cost, and the tedious and time-consuming processes of preparing thread, weaving, and processing the woven fabric--plus the growing satorial sophistication of the young generation--militate against weaving in Caticugan.

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The most recent event that probably has dealt the coup de grace to any increase of abaca weaving for clothing in the future is the sale of used American clothing; the barriofolk speak of this as "relief clothing." After the last war tons of used American clothing were sent to the islands for rehabilitation purposes. Some of the clothing was sold illegally to the people and a new post-war Philippine business was born. Today used American clothing is imported regularly to the Philippines with Cebu City as a distribution center for the Visayas. Agents go to the city to buy the clothing that they later sell in rural areas through Negros.

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Every Sunday in Siaton poblacion Dumaguete vendors came to sell used American cotton and silk dresses, blouses, and children's clothing. At every fiesta I attended there were vendors who had big piles of used American clothing through which the barriofolk hunted for correct sizes. My impression was that most of the clothing was for women or children. As a result a new source of inexpensive clothing competes with abaca garments--and is modifying the barriofolks' mode of dress. T-shirts are replacing the abaca shirt of the past as cotton trousers have already done.

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In Caticugan, those who weave abaca wear it the most. Many older women still wear old style abaca wrap-around skirts (patadyong) and blouses. Older men usually wear cotton trousers but often abaca shirts. The technical assistance of cottage specialists from the United States is mainly directed toward teaching Philippine weavers to produce materials that can be used for homefurnishings, industrial purposes, or export. One American weaving expert, sent to the Philippines to offer advice in modernizing cottage industries, writes:

> I am doubtful that abaca for clothing will ever be revived again. It is slow and cumbersome to weave, and with the present minimum wage law a must, it is almost prohibitive in cost. This minimum wage law, though wonderful in principle, is still making the introduction of new fabrics somewhat difficult, as it imposes a high outlay of money during the time of education, prior to production.[20]

The use of abaca for fish nets will decrease rapidly once cheaper twine nets become easier to obtain. There may be significant increase in weaving products from the major weaving areas of the Philippines but the production will be aimed largely toward such uses as fabrics for upholstery in automobiles, place mats, drapery, bedspreads, etc. Weaving in Caticugan as a handicraft probably is beyond resuscitation.

WOODEN SADDLES

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Horses in Siaton are more numerous than is typical of most Philippine municipalities. Some ride bareback but

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[20] A personal letter to the writer from Mrs. Hammarstrom, November 17, 1952.